

AMENDMENTS TO THE SPECIFICATION

Please replace the paragraph found on page 41, lines 20-29 of the specification with the following paragraph:

-- In order to establish which lactic acid bacterial strains are capable of producing EPS for the purposes of the present invention, a number of different strains were screened. Samples of *Leuconostoc mesenteroides* 808, *Lactobacillus plantarum* 853 and *Lactobacillus salivarius* 1502 have been deposited at the Deutsche Sammlung von Mikroorganismen und Zellkulturen GmbH. The accession numbers are DSM 15792 ["DC 808"], DSM 15793 ["DC 853"] and DSM 15794 ["DC 1502"] respectively. The depositor [Danisco Niebull GmbH, Busch-Johannsen Str. 1, 25899 Niebull] have authorised the applicant to refer to the deposited biological material in the application and given unreserved and irrevocable consent to the deposited material being made available to the public. Samples of *Lactobacillus sakei* 570 was deposited at the Deutsche Sammlung von Mikroorganismen und Zellkulturen GmbH, currently located at Inhoffenstraße 7 B, 38124 Braunschweig, Germany, under the terms of the Budapest Treaty on ~~September 8~~ September 2, 2003. The accession number for *Lactobacillus sakei* 570 is DSM 15889.--